

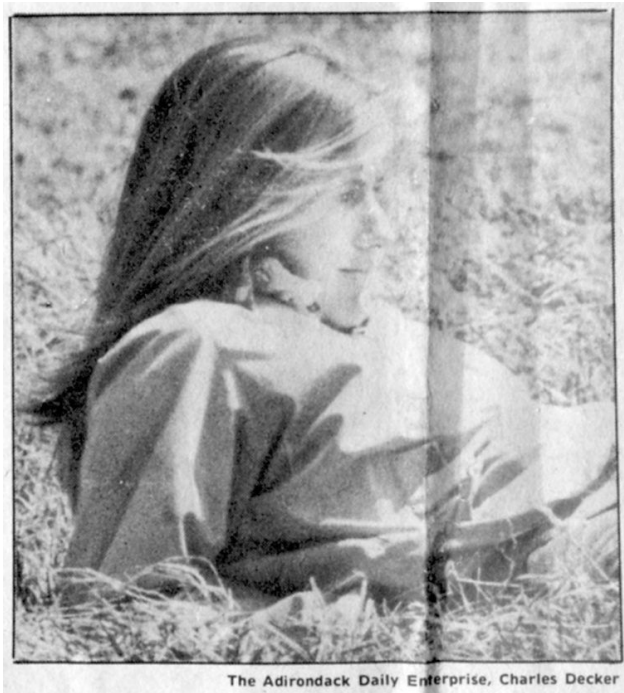
Inspired by a Dog That Came Back, Lisa Teifer Searches for Three Men Lost in the Wilds  
By Richard K. Rein Updated March 12, 1979 12:00 PM

At 4:30 p.m. Christmas Day a twin-engine Piper Navajo Chieftain took off from Metro Airport in Detroit and headed east toward Saranac Lake, N.Y., in the heart of the snow-covered Adirondack Mountains. On board were Cris Ray, 26, head of a Key West, Fla. construction company, his friend Kip Teifer, 26, their pilot, Dick Pierce, 32, and two dogs, Crip and Aqui. By the time they neared Adirondack Airport two and a half hours later, on their way to a skiing vacation at nearby Lake Placid, winds were gusting up to 90 miles an hour. The airfield was deserted, the runway had not been plowed and the landing lights were covered by drifts. The little plane passed over the airport, then disappeared into the night.

"I expected a call from Cris the next day," recalls Kip's sister, Lisa Teifer, who had been living with Ray for more than a year. "Instead I got a call from the New York State police. They said the plane was reported lost off radar. I figured it was just like Cris and the others to change their minds and go up to Montreal or someplace, but I knew Dick was a by-the-book professional pilot who wouldn't change his flight plan without notifying someone. The next morning I hired a Learjet and was up there from Key West in three hours. We flew into the airport and skidded off the runway into a snowbank. I just cried."

Twelve days later the search for the missing plane was abandoned, and Lisa flew home to Grosse Ile, Mich. to be with her mother. Unknown to her, however, a dog had been spotted several days earlier at Lake Placid, foraging for food in garbage cans. Eventually, starving and exhausted, the animal turned up at the home of Lawrence and Sheila Maxwell, who notified the local dog warden. He informed state police, and soon the identification was positive. The brown mongrel, with one blue eye and one brown, was Aqui, one of the dogs that had disappeared with the plane.

Quickly, Lisa returned to Lake Placid, transforming the Maxwells' farm into an impromptu search headquarters. The walls of the house were papered with maps of a 1,000-square-mile area within the huge Adirondack State Park, and sleeping volunteers littered the floor. "All hell broke loose," Sheila Maxwell recalls disbelievingly. "With help from the Red Cross, we were feeding 30 to 40 people at breakfast." Undiscouraged by the skepticism of state officials, who believe the fallen plane won't be found before spring, Lisa, 22, taught herself to walk on snow-shoes and take compass bearings, determined to bring the three out alive. "At the Maxwells' the energy was so high I was ready to explode," she says. "It was the first time I had ever worked with volunteers. It was such a treat after dealing with the bureaucracy, where you felt everyone was just doing his job, 9 to 5, with no sense of urgency."



The Adirondack Daily Enterprise, Charles Decker

Though dubious natives recalled that another light plane crashed 30 miles from Adirondack Airport in December 1972 and was not found for nearly a year, Lisa plunged ahead with unquenchable optimism. Financed mainly by Cris Ray's construction firm, she spent more than \$25,000 for air and ground searches, hiring small planes and helicopters at up to \$750 an hour. She hired scent dogs and in the beginning even paid skilled outdoorsmen \$30 a day to join the hunt. When she concluded that officials were dragging their heels, Lisa angrily retained F. Lee Bailey's law firm to cut through red tape and obtain a transcript of Dick Pierce's final radio messages. "It's incredible that we have to pull, kick and yank information out of these people," she fumes. "We still need to know a lot more to really pinpoint where the plane went down." She is infuriated by a rumor that the Christmas Day flight involved a shipment of drugs. "Even if that were true, and it isn't," she snaps, "there are still human beings on that plane. People ask what I'm looking for so hard. I say three lives. Isn't that enough?"

Clearly, it is motive enough for the backpackers who have slogged through the wilderness in subzero temperatures. Among them is Bob Thomas, 29, of Remsen, N.Y., whose brother Steve disappeared in the Adirondacks while hiking three years ago. "When I first read about this plane crash," says Thomas, "I could tell that Lisa wasn't getting much help from the state. I said, 'Jesus, this poor kid is going through the same thing we did.' One of the worst things is people coming up and saying, 'Are you still looking?' You began to think maybe you're crazy." How long will Thomas help search? "Until the plane is found," answers his girlfriend, Sue Corrigan. "Or until Lisa tells us to stop."

Though funds are running low, Teifer won't consider leaving Lake Placid, where she's now rented a house. Inspired by the best-seller *Alive*, which tells how 16 members of a Uruguayan rugby team survived 10 grueling weeks after a crash in the Andes, she points out that her brother and his friends had food and sleeping bags, and could have eaten the other dog, if they had had to. The search, meanwhile, has given her purpose and a curious sense of fulfillment. "At times I have my downs, but at other times I actually enjoy being here," she admits. "I feel more effective now than I ever have, more confident." Her mother adds, "Lisa still feels that the men are alive. And she knows that Cris would do the same if she were lost—he'd go to the ends of the earth to find her."

Thomas offers another explanation, based on his own fruitless search for his brother (though he did find the remains of a hiker lost for more than three years). "For a few days, maybe weeks, you hold out the idea that the guy is still alive, probably suffering, and just waiting for people to rescue him," he says. "Then you realize that he's probably dead. But that doesn't matter, because then it's not the body you're looking for—it's the thought of the person, the soul." It may be that subtle quarry, the most elusive of all, that refuses to let Lisa surrender. "I'll know when to stop," she says. "When it becomes detrimental to me or to someone else, then I'll quit. But there is a green light inside me right now. I feel this is right. I can't go on with the rest of my life until I finish my chapter up here."

'Drugs, \$12,000, 3 bodies found with plane missing since December'  
(Page 1 headline on the Enterprise, April 30, 1979)

Apr 28, 2018  
Howard Riley  
Columnist  
hjriley@adelphia.net

State police Senior Investigator Douglas Muldoon walks away from a chopper carrying two bags that may have contained money and drugs found in a wrecked plane on Nye Mountain. (Enterprise photo — Charles Decker)

Almost 40 years ago seems like recent history to me ... then I think, wow, look how many people walking around today who were not born when this plane crash happened. I can also fool myself by thinking, should I use this story because probably all the Enterprise readers remember this terrible crash?

Enterprise reporter James M. Odatto did a great job on a tough assignment with the story jumping to pages 4 and 8, accompanied by 10 photos by Odatto and Charles Decker. Here is a brief, boxed synopsis carried on page 4 with the photos:

"A 125-day saga drew to a close Sunday when New York State Police and Conservation officials removed three bodies and a dead dog from among the wreckage of an airplane missing since Christmas night, 1978. The plane was spotted on a 3,420-foot shoulder of Nye Mountain, approximately one mile west of Nye Mountain summit. "Below, right, State Police Senior Investigator Douglass Muldoon walks away from the chopper carrying two bags which may have contained the money and drugs found on the plane." Lisa Teifer, whose brother and boyfriend died in a December 1987 plane crash, watches as authorities remove a body sack from a DEC helicopter. (Enterprise photo — Charles Decker)

"LAKE PLACID — The bodies of all three passengers and their dog, \$12,000 and a small amount of drugs were found here Sunday among the wreckage of the Piper Navajo missing since Christmas night.

"The 11-seat plane was discovered about 5:50 p.m. Saturday near the top of the west shoulder of Nye Mountain at about 3,100 feet elevation. The site is 6 miles southwest of the village of Lake Placid and more than 15 miles southeast of the Adirondack Airport, where the plane was scheduled to land. Authorities remove a body sack from a DEC helicopter. (Enterprise photo — James M. Odatto)

"By chance, three airmen with the Civil Air Patrol sighted the white craft on the snow-spotted ridge as they were completing the final air search of the first day of a two-day training mission. Lt. Col. John Buddi first spotted the downed plane.

"Federal Aviation Administration investigators are expected to search the wreckage today to gather information needed to determine the reason for the crash.





“Two men and the dog were apparently thrown some 25 feet from the wreckage and lay near each other. The bodies were somewhat frozen into the ground.

“The third body had remained in the plane which had apparently smacked into the thickly-wooded mountainside at high speed. The plane was found some 300 feet from the top of the Nye Mountain shoulder.

“Captain Fred H. Teeple, investigation commander for the BCI said they apparently were killed on impact. He said there was about a quarter pound of high-grade marijuana and a small amount of cocaine found on the plane.

“The deceased are presumed to be Chris Ray, 26, of Key West, Florida, owner of the plane; Richard Pierce, the pilot, 32, of Key West and Kipling Teifer, 26 of Grosse Isle, Michigan. ‘Crip’, a mixed Great Dane and Blue Tick Hound, was one of a pair of dogs aboard the plane. The other, ‘Aqui’, a mongrel, survived the crash and was found about three miles from the site on Bear Cub Road on January 4.

“Lisa Teifer, sister of Kipling Teifer who says she was engaged to Chris Ray, waited at the periphery of the landing area as the bodies were carried from the helicopter. The helicopters shuttled to the crash site three times.

“Miss Teifer had moved to Lake Placid after the plane went missing in the hopes of finding her missing brother and friends. She appeared to be calm and somber when the first body was removed from the helicopter and laid on the grassy field as tears fell from her blue eyes.

“She then moved to go to the body which was in a sterile green bag, but after a talk with ENCON Search Coordinator Harold Martin, sat down. After a few minutes, she lay down again in the sun which had appeared after a dismal, overcast and cool morning.

“Miss Teifer said that the three deceased men had flown from Florida to Detroit and were coming to Lake Placid for a few days of skiing during the Christmas holiday.”

“In a cooperative effort, state police and conservation department employees raised the bodies by boom into a helicopter hovering at tree level.

Sue Salome, psychic, with Aqui

“Six rangers and two state police officers were lowered by a penetrator to the crash site which is within an area of thick balsam and white spruce. The men were Gary Hodgson, Doug Bissonette, Dave Ames, Joe Rupp, Sr. Investigator Douglass Muldoon and Trooper Bruce Nichols.





“The rangers used power saws to clear a path about a quarter-mile through the rugged timber and heavy blow-down area. They brought items from the plane and the bagged bodies to the site for a safer hoisting to the helicopters. The state police helicopter was operated by Chuck Wolff and the ENCON helicopter was piloted by Amsden ‘Ace’ Howland.”

“The Town of Harrietstown and the Adirondack Airport District [at that time the airport was managed by members of a board comprised of officials of all the surrounding towns] may be sued as a result of the crash. Notice of intent to sue for a total of \$30 million has been filed against the two parties. The firm of F. Lee Bailey [then the most high-profile lawyer in the country] & Aaron J. Broder, attorneys for the Teifer family issued the notices in early March.

“The New York attorneys, who specialize in suits stemming from airplane crashes, charge the Adirondack Airport was not operational because the runway lights were covered with snow.”

Jack Finegan was the airport manager in 1979, and according to the Enterprise, which had obtained the full report of the National Transportation Board about the crash, Finegan had this to say: “Allegheny Commuter did not operate any flights at all Christmas Day due to the weather. The Enterprise editorial in that April 30, 1979, issue also had this to say:

“It is obvious [from reading the full report] that the pilot, Richard Pierce of 10471 SW 78th St., Miami, Florida, had been warned all along about the deteriorating weather in the Adirondacks. Before today these facts have never been made public.” Jack Finegan said the case never got to court.

ASN Wikibase Occurrence # 13604

Last updated: 28 December 2021

This information is added by users of ASN. Neither ASN nor the Flight Safety Foundation are responsible for the completeness or correctness of this information. If you feel this information is incomplete or incorrect, you can submit corrected information.



Date: 25-DEC-1978

Time: 19:18 LT

Type: Silhouette image of generic PA31 model; specific model in this crash may look slightly different

Piper PA-31-350 Navajo Chieftain

Owner/operator: Richard N Smith

Registration: N114TA

MSN: 31-7405461

Fatalities: Fatalities: 3 / Occupants: 3

Other fatalities: 0

Aircraft damage: Written off (damaged beyond repair)

Location: Mount Nye, near Saranac Lake, Franklin County,  
New York - United States of America

Phase: En route

Nature: Private

Departure airport: Detroit Metropolitan Wayne County Airport, Detroit, Michigan  
(DTW/KDTW)

Destination airport: Adirondack Regional Airport, Saranac, New York (SLK/KSLK)

Narrative:

Written off (damaged beyond repair) 25 December 1978 when wrecked in a forced landing on Mount Nye, near Saranac Lake, New York (at approximate coordinates: 44.18726°N 74.02382°W). The Official NTSB report attributed the cause of the accident to the pilot "pressing on" with his flight despite the adverse weather conditions. The aircraft was initially posted as "missing", but the wreckage was recovered from the crash site, when it was discovered near Saranac Lake on 29 April 1979 - just over four months after the accident.

All three persons on board (pilot, co pilot and one passenger) were killed. According to one published source (see link #7):

"That story sounds like the 1978 crash on Mount Nye. It happened at Christmas, 1978. It was a green and white Piper (2 engines), and it snowed soon after, so that the initial search from the air never found it. Then, just as they gave up searching, one of the two dogs on the plane showed up in Lake Placid and was recognized by friends of the pilot and two passengers who were on the plane.

The search was restarted, but the plane wasn't found until the following spring after the snow had melted. All on the plane appeared to have died instantly, but one had actually gone through the roof of the cabin. Presumably, the surviving dog followed that individual through the hole. The word was that the pilot had been smuggling pot with his plane, and when found there was some pot and lots of cash on the plane."

Sources:

1. NTSB Identification: NYC79FA044 at [https://www.nts.gov/\\_layouts/nts.aviation/brief.aspx?ev\\_id=39227&key=0](https://www.nts.gov/_layouts/nts.aviation/brief.aspx?ev_id=39227&key=0)
2. FAA: [http://registry.faa.gov/aircraftinquiry/NNum\\_Results.aspx?NNumbertxt=114TA](http://registry.faa.gov/aircraftinquiry/NNum_Results.aspx?NNumbertxt=114TA)
3. <http://plane crashmap.com/plane/ny/N114TA/>
4. <http://web.archive.org/web/20170317205416/http://www.baaa-acro.com/1978/archives/crash-of-a-piper-pa-31-navajo-chieftain-in-lake-placid-3-killed/>
5. <http://people.com/archive/inspired-by-a-dog-that-came-back-lisa-teifer-searches-for-three-men-lost-in-the-wilds-vol-11-no-10/>
6. <http://www.adirondackalmanack.com/2009/11/a-short-history-of-adirondack-airplane-crashes.html>
7. <http://www.adkforum.com/showpost.php?p=49245&postcount=6>

## About the Archive

This is a digitized version of an article from The Times's print archive, before the start of online publication in 1996. To preserve these articles as they originally appeared, The Times does not alter, edit or update them. Occasionally the digitization process introduces transcription errors or other problems; we are continuing to work to improve these archived versions.

SARANAC LAKE, N.Y. — The plane rolled and bounced through the frigid air, swooping so low over the mountains that Jim Helms could point out deer tracks in the sometimes waist deep snow, could see the color of a man's winter cap and the make of an old car that had been abandoned in the wilderness. Turning at a sharp angle to look again at a fallen tree or a stone ledge, he flew so low that he could make out the details of the branches, the rock — could see everything, in fact, except what he was looking for.



Three young men may be dying somewhere out there. That is what everyone is thinking as they bend over the maps covered with wax pencil markings, muffle themselves in down jackets and insulated gloves for the trips into the sky, fly over a country so wild that it looks to city folk more like the Rockies than upstate New York, scan the heaps of snow, the massive evergreens, the mute frozen lakes, and the mountains for any trace of a private plane that vanished here on Christmas Day.

"It is beautiful but treacherous," says Lisa Teifer as she looks out on this landscape from the Adirondack Airport, and she has reason to know that this is true; her brother, her friend and their pilot were in that plane, and are out there somewhere. Three young men who may be dying. Or, who are already dead.

Miss Teifer will not accept that. Neither will her other brother, Tom, or the friends from Key West, Fla., who have come to this town, near Lake Placid and 300 miles from New York City, to help search for the men. Neither, through their actions, will a small group of private pilots who have been volunteering their time to go up in their small planes to look for Cris Ray, 26 years old, Richard Pierce, 32, and Kipling Teifer, 26, three pilots themselves who are never discussed in the past tense by the searchers. The missing men were athletic, savvy about the wilderness, trained in survival tactics, carrying warm ski clothes. They could have made it.

"You know how I feel when I go up and search?" said Mr. Helms, who has taken time off from his construction job on the Lake Placid 1980 Winter Olympic Games site to fly over these mountains in his tiny two seater, green-and-white like the missing aircraft. "I think of those scenes in movies where the plane's flying over and these guys are on the ground shouting and waving but somehow, the guy in the air just misses them. If I cough at the wrong minute I could miss them. I've probably overflown the spot a hundred times. You never know when you're going to need this yourself."

That aspect of the rescue mission has made many of these men, as well as Miss Teifer



and her friends, angry at the state's official agencies. They contend that, after five days of searching by the Civil Air Patrol, the Air Force, and other groups, the search was called off because Mr. Ray, who is Miss Teifer's friend and a Key West developer; her brother, Kipling, and their pilot, Richard Pierce, were not among the state's rich and powerful. These agencies deny that contention, saying that they have manned search missions the people here do not know about and have been hampered on some days because of bad visibility and weather in the area.

Said Eugene McCardle of the Civil Air Patrol: "We never called off this mission. We don't call off a mission unless there's a result. We've done a lot that these people haven't seen and we don't explain—we just do it."

Jon Coughtry, head of a group called Adirondack Air Search, which is coordinating the volunteer searchers, countered, "We've been looking while they haven't been around and we'll keep looking whether they're here or not."

The 10 seat twin engine aircraft, carrying the three men from Detroit to the Adirondacks for a skiing vacation, it seems, lost both instruments and altitude as it approached and then overshot the airport in the midst of a blinding snowstorm and winds that, at times, approached 100 miles an hour.

Voice contact with the plane was lost at around 7:20 P.M. that night. But, by systematically interviewing people who live along the airport approach, Mr. Coughtry believes he has reconstructed some of the moves the plane made. Some people have reported hearing a plane fly over their homes so low that they ran to the windows expecting to see it crash. The searchers must follow every lead—no matter how farfetched some seem—from the hordes of sympathetic area residents who have called or come to the airport. There was the abashed man who approached Miss Teifer—"My wife just wouldn't be able to sleep if I didn't tell you"—who had seen near Fish Creek Pond two dogs like the pets that had been aboard the missing aircraft. Descriptions did not match.

Psychics from all over reported remarkably similar visions: a game trail, brook, a stone ledge, and the wing of the airplane. In the 40 mile corridor on which much of the search is being focused, there may be thousands of spots fitting that description. The fact is that, if the plane is covered with snow, it may not be found until spring and may never be seen from the air.



LI  
EE  
IL  
3:  
3  
12  
20  
Li  
ee  
m



CENS  
DETA  
S  
52:0  
PM  
/17/  
21  
cens  
Infor  
ation



Name: RAY, CRIS CLAXTON (Primary Name)  
END OF THE ROAD CONST & SUP IN  
BA Name)

(D

Main Address: 645 UNITED ST #20  
KEY WEST Florida 33040-3235  
County: MONROE

License Location: 645 UNITED ST #20  
KEY WEST FL 33040-3235  
County: MONROE

#### License Information

License Type: Registered General Contractor  
Rank: Reg General  
License Number: RG0029593  
Status: Null and Void  
Licensure Date: 01/20/1977  
Expires:

Special Qualifications Qualification Effective

#### Alternate Names

END OF THE ROAD CONST & SUP IN

<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/55264188/claxton-ray>

## Cedric Sunray

(enrolled member of the MOWA Band of Choctaw Indians) has been a teacher for many years at the pre-K, elementary, middle high school, high school, and collegiate levels. His teaching has taken place in public, private, and Indian reservation schools and in group homes and juvenile detention centers throughout the United States and Canada. He is the husband of Kiowa tribal member Randi Sunray and father of four children (Niigan, Tdohasan, Kowi, and Onde). Mr. Sunray was born in Canada and raised on the island of Key West, Florida. He lost his father as a youth due to his dad's involvement in the drug trade prevalent in the Florida Keys during the 1970s and 1980s. The life lessons he learned through this experience, the diversity of the places where he has lived and worked over the years, as well as being a mixed-race/culture individual, has provided him with a unique insight into the meanings of community, family, education, and responsibility. His favorite quote is by Dominican-American author Junos Dias, "You can contain multitudes." Mr. Sunray holds a Bachelor of Native/American Indian/Indigenous Studies from Trent University in Ontario, Canada and a Master of Indigenous Nations Studies from the University of Kansas. He also formerly attended Haskell Indian Nations University and is currently a student at the University of Oklahoma College of Law.



# FAMILY



White college recruiter who was fired from Oklahoma Christian University for telling high school students to 'line up by their skin color and hair texture' already has a new job and plans to use the exercise again.



Cedric Sunray was fired from his job with the university after he told students from Harding Charter Preparatory in Oklahoma City to line up for the exercise. Sunray told students to line up by 'darkest to lightest skin complexion' before telling them to line up 'nappiest hair in the back and straighter hair in the front' He was fired soon after the initial backlash from the news but the educator of 20 years asserts that he has done the exercise 87 times just in 2020 alone

Korey Todd, an 11th grader who was subjected to the exercise, found it to be self-serving and not helpful. Of Sunray, the student continued: 'He shouldn't be in the school field if that's his message'

John deSteiguer, president of Oklahoma Christian University, went to the charter school on Monday to apologize to students

By Matthew Wright For Dailymail.com

Published: 11:54 EST, 3 March 2020 | Updated: 14:56 EST, 1 November 2020

A former Oklahoma Christian University recruiter who was fired after telling high school students to line up by their skin color and hair texture shares that he plans to use the 'icebreaker' again even though it has 'destroyed' his reputation.

Cedric Sunray was fired from his job with the university after he told students from Harding Charter Preparatory in Oklahoma City to line up from 'darkest to lightest skin complexion' before telling them to line up with 'nappiest hair in the back and straighter hair in the front' on February 24.

Sunray was fired soon after the initial backlash from the news but the educator of 20 years asserts that he has done the exercise 87 times just in 2020 alone. Cedric Sunray was fired from his job with the university after he told students from Harding Charter Preparatory in Oklahoma City to line up for the exercise on February 24.

Sunray told students at the charter school to line up by 'darkest to lightest skin complexion' before telling them to line up 'nappiest hair in the back and straighter hair in the front' Sunray told students at the charter school to line up by 'darkest to lightest skin complexion' before telling them to line up 'nappiest hair in the back and straighter hair in the front'

'It destroyed my reputation but my character won't change,' Sunray explained to KFOR. 'I break the groups into four teams and then I say line up darkest to the front and lightest to the back.'

Sunray, who says he has already been hired by another area university, admits that his teaching is unorthodox but asserts that the practice is about 'breaking down all those walls' 'From the largest afro to the tightest braid to the blondest with blue eyes. They all want to know they are valued and warranted. And that is what I provide.'

Korey Todd, an 11th grader who was subject to the exercise, found it to be self-serving and not helpful. 'I accept who I am and what I look like,' he said. 'I don't need an exercise from a college recruiter personally.' Of Sunray, the student continued: 'He shouldn't be in the school field if that's his message.'

Sunray, who says he has already been hired by another area university, admits that his teaching is unorthodox but asserts that the practice is about 'breaking down all those walls.' He also acknowledged plans to continue with the exercise but shared that he would give a more up

front explanation before beginning the 'icebreaker.' 'I have been doing this exercise for years,' Sunray said. 'We need to have these conversations.'

John deSteiguer, president of Oklahoma Christina University, went to the charter school on Monday to apologize to students.

'I'm very ashamed and embarrassed. I'm mad about this. This doesn't represent Oklahoma Christian, so I just want to apologize to the students,' deSteiguer said. The president expressed similar sentiments in a statement to OC students the day before. 'I believe that mistreating people and especially because of skin color is a sin. What this recruiter did is not who Oklahoma Christian is and not what I want Oklahoma Christian to be,' he added. Chris Sunray's full statement about the 'racist' icebreaker.

“As a 6’4, 225lb. straight male of white racial phenotype, as well as being a former NCAA athlete and university coach, I know well the privilege and prestige that all these elements have provided me in America and never take that lightly.

**Then there exists the other side of my reality. I am the son of a cocaine dealer who lost his life due to his involvement in the drug game. [ *Uncle Wayne Ray: This is a total lie and a large untruth! Cris Ray was a general contractor and was 26 when he died in 1978. He may have been involved in marihuana but was not a cocaine drug dealer and was not shot to death. Cris and his girlfriend’s brother, were in a plane crash at 5pm on December 25<sup>th</sup> 1978 when their plane crashed into Nye Mountain near Lake Placid New York This response was phoned in to John deSteiguer, president of Oklahoma Christina University and placed on their Twitter page*]**

I am an enrolled tribal member of a tribe where virtually all members are identifiable as People of Color. I was raised in a primarily Hispanic & Black community. The greatest mentors in my life have been Black, Hispanic and American Indian women & men. My closest friends are Black, Hispanic & American Indian. My wife and daughter are identifiable Women of Color (American Indian). I have stood as an advocate and ally against racism directed towards the Black community, including when I have had to stand against others in Indian Country, since my teenage years and have over 30 published works in magazines and major academic press books related to dismantling racism which are easily searchable on the internet.

The hundreds of workshops, presentations and trainings I provide to a variety of educational systems are focused on higher education funding and access, racism, colorism, classism, body image issues, food insecurities, perceptions of addiction, mental wellness, basic financial literacy, social media realities, positive classroom management principles and more. As a former teacher at three predominantly Black high schools in Oklahoma City — Oklahoma Centennial, Frederick Douglass and Northeast Academy (where I



was honored as Teacher of the Year during the 2017-2018 school year) — I regularly engaged my students and colleagues on these issues.

My teaching is unorthodox, humorous, challenging and, most importantly, necessary. My Black and non-Black students, their families, my colleagues and others will attest to this and be quick to support my character, intention and more typical results.

Nothing I spoke at Harding Charter Preparatory during an initial “ice-breaker” session had any intention of promoting a racist agenda. My presentations are the opposite. They are intended to take a hard look at issues such as this. The most dangerous things in education are those we are unwilling to discuss. And sometimes when those discussions occur, misunderstanding and even anger can be the result.

Having done 87 of these exact presentations this year prior to this one, my only regret in reflection is not providing myself enough time to fully explain the purpose as I have been able to at other presentations, as some of the students and staff from what I understand felt like it was not explained thoroughly.

Despite this, we must continue these discussions. As educators, we are bound to doing this ethically and morally. Like dangers in education, we must also acknowledge the most dangerous elements in the media are those that require a 30 second sound bite and no context. Unlike educational engagements, which take time and patience, the majority of media doesn’t allow for taking the time and corresponding effort to get to the heart of a situation prior to creating an atmosphere of vilification, whether intentional or not.

My concern does not live with myself today. My concern is the perception by others of my former employer, Oklahoma Christian University, which is an open, inviting and supportive environment for people of many different races, ethnicities and nationalities. This situation should not discredit the institution. My words are my own.

My second and greatest concern, however, is the wellness of the students and staff at Harding Charter Preparatory and any push back they will receive from online predators who attempt to discredit them for publicly airing their grievances towards me. I stand by all students in speaking their mind and making their case. If the result is perceived as injurious to me, then I need to be to handle that.

One of my most profound mentors taught me early on in my teaching career to replace “safe” with “substantive” and then you can assist people better with their own wellness. I have no regrets in using this approach in my teaching and in my life. I have reached out to the leadership of both schools impacted by the presentation and offered to attend any meetings or forums that are necessary to discuss this situation and answer any and all questions that may be posed towards me.”

John deSteiguer, the president of Oklahoma Christian University, apologized to Harding Charter Preparatory High School students and staff members on Monday.Credit...Keaton Ross/Talon

By Christine Hauser  
March 3, 2020

A college recruiter from Oklahoma Christian University is no longer working for the school after he told a group of high school students to line up organized by their skin color and hair texture, officials said on Tuesday.



The recruiter, Cedric Sunray, visited Harding Charter Preparatory High School in Oklahoma City on Feb. 24, and met with 110 juniors and four teachers in the gymnasium to talk about opportunities at the college, said the principal, Steven Stefanick.

"The recruiter asked the students to line up from darkest to lightest skin complexion, and then line up from nappiest to straightest hair," Mr. Stefanick said in a telephone interview. As the students did as they were told, some of the teachers got up and left to report the request to school administrators, who intervened, he said.

"There was no purpose to it," he said. "We don't condone that kind of behavior in our school." Mr. Stefanick said that when he complained, the university informed him that the recruiter was no longer employed after the incident.

The president of the university, John deSteiguer, visited the school on Monday to apologize to students and staff members, the university said in an email on Tuesday.

"Admissions leadership found out about the Harding incident immediately after the visit on Monday, Feb. 24," it said. "Within one hour, Cedric was no longer employed at the university."

Mr. Sunray could not be reached for comment on Tuesday, but he wrote about the incident at the school in The Christian Chronicle and spoke to a local television station, saying he had been trying to make a point about entitlement. He said he had no intention of "promoting a racist agenda" but should have explained the purpose of the remarks better. He said the exercise was meant to be an "icebreaker" and that he has made the same presentation dozens of times at other institutions.

"I break the teams into four teams and then I say, 'Line up darkest to the front, lightest to the back,'" Mr. Sunray, 45, told KFOR. "From the largest Afro to the tightest braid to the blondest hair, blue-eyed student. They all want to know that they are valued and they are warranted. And that is the kind of programs I provide."

He described himself in The Christian Chronicle as a member of a Native American tribe with a "white racial phenotype." "I know well the privilege and prestige that all these elements have provided me in America and never take that lightly," he wrote. He said that his presentations were "intended to take a hard look at issues" like race and privilege. "The most dangerous things in education are those we are unwilling to discuss. And sometimes when those discussions occur, misunderstanding and even anger can be the result."

He said he has done "hundreds of workshops, presentations and trainings" and has been a teacher at predominantly black Oklahoma City high schools — Oklahoma Centennial, Frederick A. Douglass and Northeast Academy. He wrote, "My only regret in reflection is not providing myself enough time to fully explain the purpose as I have been able to at other presentations."

Harding Charter, one of the top public high schools in the state, has a diverse student body comprising equally of Hispanic, white and African-American students, Mr. Stefanick said. In a series of statements on the school's Facebook page about the presentation, he called it "inappropriate and hurtful," and said counselors were available to speak with students.

"He said, 'OK, everyone now line up from darkest to lightest skin complexion,'" Korey Todd, a student, told KFOR.

"I accept who I am and who I look like, so I feel like I don't need an exercise from a college recruiter to tell me that, personally," the student said.



Family: Wayne Ray, Joan Glenn, Biki Ray, Cris Ray Florida 1970

OKLAHOMA CITY (KFOR) – A former Oklahoma Christian University recruiter is sharing his side of the story after lining students up by their skin color and hair texture. Students and parents are still outraged, as the university made a personal visit to Harding Charter Prep on Monday to apologize.

“It destroyed my reputation but my character won’t change,” Cedric Sunray said. The now-fired Oklahoma Christian University recruiter, Cedric Sunray, sat down with News 4 after the exercise he calls an “icebreaker” ignited a firestorm.

“He said ‘ok, everyone now line up from darkest to lightest skin complexion,’” 11th grader Korey Todd said.

“He told us nappiest hair in the back and straighter hair in the front,” 11th grader Rio Brown said.

Sunray is defending his presentation saying he’s done the exact same exercise 87 times just this year. “I break the groups into four teams and then I say line up darkest to the front and lightest to the back,” Sunray said. “From the largest afro to the tightest braid to the blondest with blue eyes. They all want to know they are valued and warranted. And that is what I provide.” The educator of 20 years was fired within an hour.

The president of OC apologized to the university before making a personal visit to Harding Charter Prep on Monday. “I am embarrassed and ashamed and I am mad at what happened,” Oklahoma Christian University President John deSteiguer said.

News 4 caught up with 11th grader Korey Todd again on Monday.

"I accept who I am and what I look like," Korey Todd said. "I don't need an exercise from a college recruiter personally."

"It is about breaking down all those walls," Sunray said. Sunray tells News 4 he's already been hired by another metro university, but he won't say which one, admitting his teaching is unorthodox.

"Will you do this exercise again?" News 4 reporter Peyton Yager asked.

"Oh yes," Sunray said.



Cedric Ray at Father's grave site, Lineville Alabama with Mother Joan Glenn 1979  
Photo poem for his Grandfather Claxton Ray. Cedric seems to have forgotten about his British heritage.

"You are going to keep doing it?" News 4 reporter Peyton Yager asked.

"I have been doing this exercise for years," Sunray said. "We need to have these conversations." Sunray says the one thing he will do differently is a more up front explanation about the exercise beforehand.

"He shouldn't be in the school field if that's his message," Todd said.

Oklahoma Christian University President John deSteiguer says the university will put in programs like mandatory cultural sensitivity training for employees and screening future presentations. Sunray says he has reached out to both Oklahoma Christian and Harding Charter Prep to try to explain himself but hasn't heard back.

Sunray also gave News 4 a full statement: (also above)



*As a 6'4 225lb. straight male of white racial phenotype, as well as being a former NCAA athlete and university coach, I know well the privilege and prestige that all these elements have provided me in America and never take that lightly. Then there exists the other side of my reality. I am the son of a cocaine dealer who lost his life due to his involvement in the drug game. I am an enrolled tribal member of a tribe where virtually all members are identifiable as People of Color. I was raised in a primarily Hispanic & Black community. The greatest mentors in my life have been Black, Hispanic and American Indian women & men. My closest friends are Black, Hispanic & American Indian. My wife and daughter are identifiable Women of Color (American Indian). I have stood as an advocate and ally against racism directed towards the Black community, including when I have had to stand against others in Indian Country, since my teenage years and have over 30 published works in magazines and major academic press books related to dismantling racism which are easily searchable on the internet. The hundreds of workshops, presentations and training's I provide to a variety of educational systems are focused on higher education funding and access, racism, colorism, classism, body image issues, food insecurities, perceptions of addiction, mental wellness, basic financial literacy, social media realities, positive classroom management principles and more. As a former teacher at three predominantly Black high schools in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma Centennial, Frederick Douglass and Northeast Academy (where I was honored as Teacher of the Year during the 2017-2018 school year), I regularly engaged my students and colleagues on these issues. My teaching is unorthodox, humorous, challenging and most importantly necessary. My Black and non-Black students, their families, my colleagues and others will attest to this and be quick to support my character, intention and more typical results. Nothing I spoke at Harding Charter Preparatory during an initial "ice-breaker" session had any intention of promoting a racist agenda. My presentations are the opposite. They are intended to take a hard look at issues such as this. The most dangerous things in education are those we are unwilling to discuss. And sometimes when those discussions occur, misunderstanding and even anger can be the result. Having done 87 of these exact presentations this year prior to this one, my only regret in reflection is not providing myself enough time to fully explain the purpose as I have been able to at other presentations, as some of the students and staff from what I understand felt like it was not explained thoroughly. Despite this, we must continue these discussions. As educators, we are bound to doing this ethically and morally. Like dangers in education, we must also acknowledge the most dangerous elements in the media are those that require a 30 second sound bite and no context. Unlike educational engagements, which take time and patience, the majority of media doesn't allow for taking the time and corresponding effort to get to the heart of a situation prior to creating an atmosphere of vilification whether intentional or not. My concern does not live with myself today. My concern is the perception by others of my former employer Oklahoma Christian University, which is an open, inviting and supportive environment for people of many different races, ethnicities and nationalities. This situation should not discredit the institution. My words are my own. My second and greatest concern, however, is the wellness of the students and staff at Harding Charter Preparatory and any push back they will receive from online predators who attempt to discredit them for publicly airing their grievances towards me. I stand by all students in speaking their mind and making their case. If the result is perceived as injurious to me,*



*then I need to be to handle that. One of my most profound mentors taught me early on in my teaching career to replace “safe” with “substantive” and then you can assist people better with their own wellness. I have no regrets in using this approach in my teaching and in my life. I have reached out to the leadership of both schools impacted by the presentation and offered to attend any meetings or forums that are necessary to discuss this situation and answer any and all questions that may be posed towards me.*

*Cedric Sunray’s full statement*

It’s been a week since Cedric Sunray resigned from his job as a recruiter at Oklahoma Christian.

“I knew it was over. I know this world. I was done,” Sunray said.

Sunray is referring to a recruitment presentation that he gave to the junior class at Harding College Prep. After 20 years as an educator, he had turned to college recruitment.

“I wanted to motivate kids to go to college. I wanted kids to feel like they deserve it no matter who they are or where they come from,” he said speaking from his home in Norman.

As part of the presentation, Sunray asked students to participate in several exercises. It was nothing new he said, “I have given the same presentation 87 times so far this year,” he said. After breaking students into groups of four, Sunray asked them to line up according to skin tone.

“I say I want you to line up. Darkest to the front and lightest to the back. The first trajectory is that the darkest skinned people have always been relegated to the back,” he said. Then he asked them to line up by hair type, straightest to the nappiest. It was then he said, that a member of the school faculty approached him. He said, the moment she asked for his contact information he knew his career was over.

“What’s wrong with nappy?” Sunray asked. “My cultural hero is Bell Hooks. In 1999 she wrote the book, “Be Happy To Be Nappy.” I read that book to my daughter because that book is about empowering brown girls. Sunray did admit that he understands why people were offended by the exercise. The problem, he said, is context. Without seeing the entire presentation, he was immediately labeled a racist. Sunray said he is anything but.

Born in Canada, Sunray was raised in a low income, majority black and Cuban neighborhood in Key West, Florida. Growing up, he was referred to as a Conch, a slang term for native Bahamians of European descent.

**His father, an American Indian, was involved in the drug trade. When Sunray was just a child, his father was shot and killed leaving his mother to raise him on her own.** *[This is a lie. It is not true and research will show that the Ray family, via the DNA group, 23&Me shows that we are 97.5% North Western European with the remaining 1.5% Native Indian & 1.5% North African between 1640 - 1760. This is so small and opposite of Cedric’s research. Cedric also cotends that my Grandmother Ray, had an affair with a Mr. Chastang, a Cherokee Native American from the Mowa Tribe, Porch Creek Indians. Thus making my father ½ Native. This is not true. My grandmother was married to SC Ray, and would never have had an affair. I did a genealogy survey of 11 Traits and they show Claxton and his father, SC Ray, were related on many Traits. Cedric fails to recognize his Mother’s Irish/English heritage and his Grandmother Ray’s English heritage, thus thinning out his blood line. As above he was not shot and died in a plane crash. All of this was reiterated to Oklahoma Christian University President*

*John deSteiguer The articles at the beginning of this piece verify that his father died in a plane crash! ]*

Sunray showed News 9's Amber Gerard a poster with the words single parent written across it. Holding it in the air he asked, "How many people in here have a single parent?" Holding it even higher in the air, he raised his right and said, "Don't be ashamed. Having a single parent means you have grit."

"That's what this is all about," Sunray said. "Having a conversation about real things. Things that are uncomfortable." Oklahoma College Recruiter Lined Up High School Students by Skin Color and Hair Type Cedric Sunray, an Oklahoma Christian University recruiter, said he had no intention of "promoting a racist agenda" with his presentation to students.

John deSteiguer, the president of Oklahoma Christian University, apologized to Harding Charter Preparatory High School students and staff members on Monday.  
Credit...Keaton Ross/Talon News



Compilation of articles on my Nephew Cedric (Ray) Sunray, my brother Cris Claxton Ray, Lisa Teifer et al. All non-Native North American Indian.

Wayne Ray  
Box 340 Stn B  
London Ontario N6A 4W1  
<http://hmspress.ca>  
<http://photoarchives.ca>